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SCHILLER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS

As Schiller never was interested in language for its own sake, and was evidently not possessed of a pronounced talent for language study, we can hardly expect him to have been an unusually keen student of foreign languages. So far as Goethe's dictum is concerned, that he who does not know foreign languages is ignorant of his own (IV, 162; *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 1211), Schiller had indeed no reason to feel humiliated. He had received a rigorous training in the classical languages, at least in Latin, in the preparatory school at Ludwigsburg, and at the Military Academy. In the composition of Latin verses he was far ahead of his fellow pupils at Ludwigsburg, and his examiner, Professor Jahn, testified to his ability to translate the Greek New Testament with fair fluency. His later epigram, *Tote Sprachen* (Votivtafeln 51; II, 136)

Tote Sprachen nennt ihr die Sprache des Flaccus und Pindar,
Und von beiden nur kommt, was in der unseren lebt!

is significant of his valuation of classical languages. His knowledge of Greek, however, always remained limited. It was much better than Schlegel's malicious reference to Schiller's translation of Euripides' *Iphigenie in Aulis* ("Ohn' alles Griechisch hab' ich ja verdeutscht die Iphigenia") would have us believe. Nor is Wilhelm von Humboldt's statement quite correct when in the introduction of his correspondence with Schiller he says: "He acquired the spirit of Greek poetry without ever knowing it otherwise than from translations. In doing so he shunned no pains; he preferred translations that renounced any claim to poetic value of their own; best of all he liked the literal Latin paraphrases." In corroboration of the second half of this statement, Schiller writes to Körner, March 9, 1789 (II, 248f.): "After receiving the last two acts, . . . it will be fun for you to compare my work with Josua Barnes's Latin translation, for the latter, being the most faithful, was my real original.³² Then you will probably admit that I needed a high degree of enthusiasm of my own, and that I had to add much that is my own, in order to make it as tolerable as it is. I challenge many of our poets who think so highly of their Greek and Latin learning to prove that with a text as little inspiring they would have achieved even as much as I did. I could

³²Barnes's translation had first appeared in 1694 and been reprinted in 1778. Schiller also consulted the French renderings by P. Brumoy and Prevost.

not use the subtleties of Greek as a help—I had to guess at my original, or rather, I had to create one for myself.” To Humboldt he writes on October 26, 1795 (IV, 300): “Suppose, e. g., that nature had really intended me for a poet, you will be able to explain to yourself my un-Greek form, combined with a truly unmistakable poetic spirit, from the entirely fortuitous circumstance that in the decisive age where the mental constitution takes its definite shape perhaps for the whole life, I nourished myself exclusively on modern sources, wholly neglected Greek literature (so far as it extends beyond the New Testament), and used even Latin literature very sparingly.”

One might gain a somewhat different impression from a letter to Lotte von Lengefeld, November 15, 1789 (II, 371): “Among others, I wrote several letters to my native land. There are some good men there who were my teachers, and who still have much confidence in me. A certain Professor Nast, under whom I studied (or, rather, was supposed to study) Greek, proposed to me to undertake jointly with him an edition of the Greek tragic poets. My *Iphigenie* seems to have aroused in him high ideas of his former pupil’s Greek learning. I presume that he has this plan very much at heart, and I was glad I could comply with his wish.” But Schiller’s intention of embarking on similar ventures—which, barring a few scenes from the *Phoenissae*, were never carried out—is mainly based on the consciousness of his ability to arrive at the meaning of his Greek originals intuitively through the medium of literal translations, and not on any too high notion as to his knowledge of Greek. For only a few months before the letter last quoted he had written to Körner, September 28, 1789 (II, 341): “Why have I not learned enough Greek to read Xenophon and Thucydides in the original?” Six years later he even made up his mind to resume the study of Greek privately, and wrote to Humboldt, November 9, 1795 (IV, 317f.): “We³³ also talked much during these days about Greek literature and art, and on this occasion I firmly resolved on something that I had been considering for quite a long time, namely, to carry on the study of Greek. Since you are so very familiar with this, and also know my individuality, no one can advise me as well as you can, dear friend. What I may still know of this language you must not take into consideration—it consists more in a knowledge of words than of rules, nearly all of

³³Viz., Goethe and Schiller.

which I have forgotten. I desire especially to be supplied, in addition to a good grammar and an equally good dictionary, with a book that points out the method of study and the peculiarities of this language. As to the authors to be read, I should at once take up Homer, and combine perhaps Xenophon with it. This work will, of course, make but slow progress, as I cannot devote much time to it, but I mean to interrupt it as little as possible and persist in it. During the work on my play (*Wallenstein*) it is more easily possible to me, and it will at the same time help me to forget everything modern."

Humboldt's reply, November 20, 1795 (Leitzmann's edition, p. 210ff.) is very illuminative and worth quoting in full: "It is a fine resolution that you wish to learn Greek, and it has often touched me to see with what difficulty you must get from translations what others, who can go directly to the sources, are unable to comprehend. Your resolve has also been a new proof to me how thoroughly you take up everything with which you occupy yourself. But you will certainly experience many difficulties, and in view of the frequent interference with your work due to your poor health I scarcely know whether I ought to advise you to learn a language that is in itself always difficult and never repays the beginner for the trouble and time he must sacrifice to it. It will cost you much time, and that means a good deal for you who make such excellent use of your time. Your plan seems to me capable of execution only under the supposition that you can utilize for it those hours that would otherwise be lost in reading irrelevant things. I wish most heartily that you *knew* Greek; I am also convinced that you will learn it in an incredibly short time. Nevertheless I cannot but deplore the hours that will unfailingly be lost in the first beginning. If I were now, as I was last winter, at Jena, this objection could easily be met. One learns more easily in the company of another person, and we could at any rate chat away some hours in that manner. Assuming, however, that you remain faithful to your plan, Homer is certainly the proper beginning. I do not advise you to take up Xenophon at the same time. The old Ionian and the late Attic dialects differ so immensely that it would only mean additional difficulties. If you should wish to take up something else simultaneously, it would, in my opinion, be Herodotus or Hesiod. The only convenient and useful lexicon is *Hederici Graecum lexicon manuale ex cura Ernesti*. A more ample but inconven-

ient one is the one by Scapula. Since the latter is among my books at Jena, you may consult it also eventually. Of grammars the most methodical is Trendelenburg's *Griechische Grammatik*, latest edition. This also is among my books. As a repertory for all grammatical details that might occur to you I would suggest the *Vollständige griechische grammatica marchica* or, since it is probably no longer in the market, the so-called Halle grammar, which is the most convenient for reference, just as Trendelenburg's is for systematic instruction. I have been trying in vain to think of the desired book on the method of study and on the idiomatic character of the language. Trendelenburg's introduction contains some things, but not very much, and what he says on the middle voice you may regard as entirely incorrect. Some details you may also find in Harris's *Hermes*, a good translation of which you will find among my books. But the real book on the subject will have to be written yet. I have for a long time past reflected on a method of finding the categories under which to classify the peculiarities of a language, and the way of describing the specific character of any particular tongue. But as yet I cannot succeed, and the task is certainly fraught with many difficulties. How glad I should be if I could personally direct your Greek studies! How great an insight I should get from you into the language which I already know fairly well, and in the acquisition of which I could supply you with the data! So you will permit me, if you stick to your plan, to make this an occasional theme of our correspondence. In Homer the analysis of the forms will at first give you the greatest difficulty, and I am not sure whether you ought to attempt to recall this systematically into your memory. Should not the following method prove expeditious? The new translation by Voss is surprisingly faithful. Suppose you read first some fifty lines very carefully, lay the book aside, and take up the Greek text, try to make your way into it through mere memory, divination, tact, and afterwards verify by looking up whatever interests you. Thus your reasoning faculty would be more called into play, and you would enter more deeply than by the usual mechanical route. Be sure to inform me of your progress."

Schiller evidently did not make much progress—indeed, it is questionable whether he took up the study in good earnest; possibly even Humboldt's answer may have discouraged him. He renewed his intention, however, five years later, as expressed in a

letter to Goethe, September 26, 1800 (VI, 205), and again the plan did not materialize. During the five intervening years his ambitions had perceptibly diminished, for all that he now explains as his purpose is the desire to get an insight into Greek metrics. But even though according to his own confession, above quoted, his knowledge of Greek was limited to the knowledge of Greek words, he evidently was more than sufficiently acquainted with Greek word formation to imitate it successfully in his own poetry.

Schiller prized Greek all the more because to him it seemed to be the language of poetry *par excellence*, for a reason expressed in his *Æsthetic Lectures* (1792; XII, 352, 22): "Personality is the compensation given to the natural object for that which it loses through the abstract nature of language. A language that abounds in such personifications is a poetic language. Thus Greek mythology presented almost all actions of nature as actions of free beings, and has become almost indispensable to poetry." Or, as he phrases it in *Die Götter Griechenlands*: "Wo jetzt nur, wie unsre Weisen sagen, seelenlos ein Feuerball sich dreht, lenkte damals seinen goldnen Wagen Helios in stiller Majestät. Diese Höhen füllten Oreaden, eine Dryas lebt' in jenem Baum, aus den Urnen lieblicher Najaden sprang der Ströme Silberschaum. Jener Lorbeer wand sich einst um Hilfe, Tantals Tochter schweigt in diesem Stein, Syrinx' Klage tönt' aus jenem Schilfe, Philomelas Schmerz aus diesem Hain. An der Liebe Busen sie zu drücken, gab man höhern Adel der Natur; alles wies den eingeweihten Blicken, alles eines Gottes Spur." Mythological science has cruelly destroyed the lovely picture of Greek religion as the German classics viewed it; but so far as its imprint on language is concerned, Schiller has not been refuted, and never will be.

Of the character of the Latin language Schiller has the highest opinion. In his début as a critic, the review of Stäudlin's *Proben einer deutschen Aeneis* (1781), however, it is not Latin as a whole, but rather the diction of Virgil that arouses his unlimited admiration. He says (XVI, 157, 8ff.): "Mr. Stäudlin has dared to essay the flight of the Roman. . . . It is no mean venture to enter into competition with the delicate Latin poet who, as the translator admits, distinguishes himself especially through harmony and elegance—I should say, rather, whose entire greatness consists in the *expression* of Homeric descriptions. . . . A translation reveals to our critical eyes, naked and unprotected, his defects,

which before had been concealed in the charming garb of expression—there stands the great Virgil like a peacock bereft of his plumage—a beardless boy overagainst Homer the man. . . . Virgil will and must lose infinitely in every translation or did the translator think that the Roman, on the contrary, would gain strength in the manly garb of the Teuton? There is nothing more harmonious than a line of Virgil.” The numerous criticisms in detail offered, and emendations suggested, to the translator are convincing proof that Schiller must have possessed a far more than average knowledge of Latin, as indeed he demands from the translator “an accurate philological knowledge of both languages”—a demand of which, as we have seen, he falls far short in his own translations of Greek, but a demand that can only be deemed indispensable. Over a decade later, in the preface to his *Zerstörung Trojas*, the ottaverime rendering of the second book of the *Æneid*, he says (XVI, 111, 11): “He (the translator) thought that he detected the peculiar magic spell with which the Virgilian verse carries us away in the rare blending of ease and strength, elegance and greatness, majesty and grace, in which the Roman poet was undeniably far more aided by his language than the German translator can ever hope from his. . . . (112, 3). It was this consideration in particular that caused the author to prefer the eight line stanza, that one among all German metrical systems in which our mother tongue at times forgets its native harshness and yet through its manly character is sufficiently prevented from falling into weakness and playfulness. . . . (113, 17). The translator is very willing to submit to any cold-blooded critical test so far as the conscientiousness and faithfulness of his rendering is concerned, but he would most solemnly deprecate any comparison of his work with the unattainable diction of the Roman poet, which inevitably, and without his fault, must redound to his disadvantage. For he defies all past, present, and future German poets to cope without detriment with the delicate organization and the musical flow of the Latin tongue in such a vacillating, inflexible, broad, Gothic,³⁴ harsh-sounding language as our dear mother tongue.”

³⁴This word was in the eighteenth century equivalent to old-fashioned, bizarre, grotesque. Other instances of it are found in XVI, 171, 29 Wo er tragisch sein will, wird er oft gotisch und burlesk; 296, 25 wechselte das Lächerliche nicht zu gotisch mit dem Rührenden und Schrecklichen ab; 171, 8 Der “Hymnus an die Schönheit” ist ein überladenes gotisches Gemälde voll Nichtsinn und Verwirrung; letters I, 107 die gotische Vermischung von Komischem und Tragischem.

I am not aware that Latin exercised any influence on Schiller's language, unless it can be traced in the elative, or absolute, use of the superlative, which is rather frequent. In looking for cases of it, we have to disregard the usage of the curial style that demanded, and demands, phrases like *untertänigster* and *ergebenster N. N.* at the end of letters, and such harmless little falsehoods as *liebster Freund* that may be addressed to any one out of a dozen or more persons with whom the speaker or writer is more or less intimate. We have to confine ourselves to cases where, as in Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*, "Mein Weg ist der weiteste. Wir wollen heut noch über die Grenze," reference is clearly only to a very high degree of the quality expressed by the adjective. Of such we find, chosen at random, *Don Carlos* 102 ff., "Ihr Weg, hochwürdigster Vater, ist der weiteste, bis Sie auf Petri Stühle niedersitzen; *Geisterseher*, II, 239, 27, Die Fahrt war die angenehmste; XV, 212, 36, Die Gefahr ist die höchste; XVI, 63, 30, der Empfang ist der feurigste; 130, 2, das zärtlichste Mädchen ward sehr bewegt; 168, 11, Reinhardts Poesien verraten die zärtlichste Empfindung und den liebenswürdigsten Charakter ihres Verfassers; letters, I, 37 (to Dalberg, July, 1781) Mehr lässt mich die tiefste Überzeugung meiner Schwäche nicht denken, gewiss aber wenn meine Kräfte jemals an ein Meisterstück hinaufklettern können, so dank ich es Euer Exzellenz wärmstem Beifall allein (ibid.) der gütigste Vorschlag Euer Exzellenz für das gütigste Anerbieten einer Reiseunkostenvergütung. His mature style is fairly free from this use.³⁵

For the study of modern foreign languages Schiller had not nearly such splendid opportunities as Goethe had enjoyed, both by early training and by travel in foreign countries; for Schiller never was abroad.³⁶ Of Italian he had no knowledge at all. English he knew only superficially. His earliest acquaintance with, or interest in,

³⁵In his youthful prose Schiller has a few cases of the so-called Klopstockian comparative ("rhetorisch abgeschwächter Komparativ," cf. Erdmann-Mensing, *Grundzüge der deutschen Syntax*, I, § 89); e. g., XVI, 173 f. "Er hat wahre, mehr zärtliche als starke Empfindung, einen mildern, gemässigten Schwung der Phantasie."

³⁶To a young Englishman Goethe said: "You have done well in that, for the study of German, you have come over to us, where you not only gain the language easily and quickly, but will be enabled to take along to England in your mind the elements on which our language rests, our soil, climate, way of living, manners, social intercourse, constitution, and the like." (*Gespräche mit Eckermann*, January 10, 1825.)

this language may have been imparted to him, perhaps even before he entered the Military Academy, by his globe-trotting cousin Johann Friedrich Schiller.³⁷ His acquaintance with Shakespeare in the Academy was based solely on the translations of Wieland and Eschenburg—which when in 1800 he translated *Macbeth* had to stand him virtually in the same stead as Josua Barnes's Latin *Iphigenia* in his translation of Euripides' work, even though in the case of *Macbeth* he did go back to the original and used Goethe's English dictionary. When Schiller writes to Dalberg, August 24, 1784 (I, 207), "I have at present divided my time between original work and the reading of French. Your excellency will certainly approve of my reason for the latter. In the first place it expands my knowledge of dramatic things and enriches my imagination, and secondly, I hope thereby to establish a wholesome equilibrium between two extremes, namely, English and French taste," it is a singular misunderstanding of his words to ascribe to him the alternate reading of English and French books.³⁸ Schiller always preferred to read English in translation. From Göschen he requests Robertson's *History of Charles V* in either German or French (October 19, 1786; I, 314). Locke he reads in a French translation, revised and recommended by Locke himself (letter to Körner, August 18, 1787; I, 387). He wants Körner to undertake for his collection the translation of English memoirs (New Year's Day, 1789; II, 202). A few years later, January 1, 1792 (III, 187), he asks Körner: "Do you not know a satisfactory translation of Locke? The one by a certain Tittel is absolutely inadequate. It would be glorious if you would undertake the work. I consider it both interesting and meritorious, and would engage upon it myself if I knew enough English." Nevertheless his creative instinct seems to have enabled him to judge English translations of German works rather accurately. Thus he writes to Goethe, September 12, 1794 (IV, 14): "I liked *Iphigenie* in English very much. So far as I am able to judge, this foreign garb fits her very well, and one is vividly reminded of the close kinship of the two languages." On the same day, he writes to Körner (p. 16) "His *Iphigenie* has been translated into English, and so far as I can judge, so happily that one thinks he has an original work before him, and it keeps its

³⁷See Berger's biography, I, 31 ff., and note.

³⁸As is done by Oskar Weise, *Wie lernt man einen guten deutschen Stil schreiben?* Leipzig, 1914, p. 12, § 11.

Goethean character very faithfully." On his own *Don Carlos* he addresses Georg Heinrich Nöhden, June 15, 1799 (VI, 39): "Accept my sincere thanks for your efforts concerning my *Carlos*. So far as I understand English and can judge the value of a translation, it is very well rendered; but, as poets are, they do not like to be deprived of even the most insignificant expression, and so I cannot deny that I feel sorry for several passages where strength and originality have had to be sacrificed to the spirit of the foreign language. Nor can I deny that I was loath to miss the meter in this translation." Schiller also, according to Howard Crabbe Robinson, who saw him at Weimar, appreciated Coleridge's translation of his *Wallenstein* very highly, and considered the translator a genius, but mentioned that he had made some ridiculous blunders.³⁹ Robinson in an earlier entry in his diary has the following: "The only conversation I recollect having had with Schiller arose from my asking whether he did not know English, as I saw German translations of Shakespeare among his books. He said, I have read Shakespeare in English, but on principle not much—my business in life is to write German and I am convinced that a person cannot read much in foreign languages without losing that delicate perception in the power of words which is essential to good writing."⁴⁰

If Robinson quotes the burden of Schiller's remarks correctly, and there is every indication that he does, then the poet might appear to be arrayed on the side of the antagonists of instruction in foreign languages. Of course, we know that there are two sides to this argument, and that much more can be said on the other, and that at least the average person's vernacular sensibilities are sharpened, rather than dulled, by the study of other tongues. Schiller himself certainly does not seem to have acted on the principle advocated so far as French is concerned. French ranks foremost among all the languages of which he had a knowledge, even though most likely he was not an ardent student of it for its own sake but carried on his reading with ulterior purposes in view. His mastery of the spoken tongue was mediocre at best. On this we have the testimony of Madame de Staël:⁴¹ "I saw Schiller for the first time in the salon of the Duke and Duchess of Weimar, in the presence of a highly cultured and imposing society. He read French very well,

³⁹Petersen, p. 323, No. 327; Biedermann, p. 392, No. 329.

⁴¹Petersen, p. 325, No. 331.

⁴¹Petersen, p. 368, No. 409.

but had never spoken it. I defended warmly the superiority of our dramatic system over all others; he did not refrain from opposing me, and without troubling himself about the difficulty and slowness in expressing himself in French, and without fearing the contrary opinion of the listeners, he gave voice to his innermost conviction. To refute him, I availed myself first of French weapons, vivacity and wit; but soon I discovered in what Schiller said such a wealth of ideas behind the obstacles of speech, and was so struck with this simplicity of character which caused a man of genius to engage in a struggle where he was lacking words for his thoughts; I found him so modest and so unconcerned about his success, so proud and so animated in the defense of truth as he saw it, that from that moment I bestowed on him my friendship and admiration." On another occasion during her stay at Weimar, she debated with him about Kant's philosophy;⁴² Frau von Stein regretted that he did not know enough French to inform her about it, and Ernst von Schardt reports the following: "With Schiller she talked about Kant. 'Poems, she said, cannot be translated from one language into another. But dogmas, doctrines must admit of intelligible expression in any language, why then are Kant's doctrines untranslatable?' " In French he (Schiller) could not answer this at all, he finally replied in his mother tongue, and my wife had to translate this and several other answers on the spot. She also asked what the word *transzendental* meant; then the answer was that he who understood this word also understood Kant's teachings. His doctrines, he said, were still in their infancy; after their attaining full maturity, his words would admit of understanding and translation." Schiller himself had looked forward to Mme. de Staël's arrival with mingled feelings. To Goethe he had written, November 30, 1803 (VII, 97): "Mme. de Staël is at present in Frankfurt, and we may soon expect her here. If she only understands German, I have no doubt that we shall master her, but to present to her our religion in French phrases and to cope with her volubility is too arduous a task." After his first meeting with her, he wrote to Goethe, December 21, 1803 (VII, 105): "Since even I, with my little skill in speaking French, get along quite tolerably with her, you, with your greater practice, will find it easy to communicate with her." Repeated meetings with her made him feel his deficiency more and more

⁴²Petersen, p. 379, No. 410; and p. 372, No. 414.

uncomfortably, and he writes to Körner, January 4, 1804 (VII, 108): "I see her often, and as I do not express myself in French with ease, I have really many hard hours."

But though deficient in the oral use of the language, Schiller read it sufficiently well all during his life to use French books with the same ease as German.⁴³ This is not the place to show how much Schiller owes to French writers for the cultivation of his narrative style, or to what extent he is indebted to French dramatists. But it should be noted that he also studied French writers assiduously for a graceful and easy flow of expression in general. Thus he writes to Körner, April 22, 1787 (I, 340), apropos of the *Liaisons dangereuses*: "I really wish I could acquire from this and similar books the carelessly fine and clever style that is almost never attained in our language." There are naturally, especially in the works of his first period, a good many thrusts against French ways as expressed in literature, although he does not count himself among "those conceited, strong-fisted patriots who save the taste of their country with the bludgeon" (XVI, 174, 17 ff.). The use of French by a contemporary rhymester seems to him to be "at times merely an expedient to cover up workaday thoughts with Gallic gewgaws" (ibid., I, 25 f.). As late as October 15, 1799 (VI, 96), we find anent Goethe's translation of Voltaire's *Mahomet* the following severe criticism of the chief French verse form: "The peculiarity of the Alexandrine verse to split up into two equal halves, and the nature of the rhyme to make a couplet of two Alexandrines, determine not only the entire diction, but they determine the entire inner spirit of these plays. The characters, the sentiments, the conduct of the persons, everything is thereby placed under the law of contrast, and as the musician's fiddle guides the movements of the dancer, so the two-legged nature of the Alexandrine guides the movements of the feelings and the thoughts. The intellect is summoned uninterruptedly, and every emotion, every thought is forced into this form as into the bed of Procrustes." For this reason he replaced the

⁴³An item that I remember having read on the occasion of the Schiller centenary in 1905, but which I cannot locate at present, tells of Schiller's unusual facility in translating French. In a social circle at Mannheim, he picked up a book from a table, and on being asked what it contained, fluently read from it a few pages in German. When afterwards a member of the company looked at the book he was surprised to find that it was in French and that the young poet had translated it without any one noticing it.

verse form in his translation of Picard's *Médiocre et rampant* (Der Parasit) by prose, and chose the iambic pentameter in rendering Racine's *Phèdre*.

The number and frequency of Gallicisms in his prose is proof of Schiller's intensive occupation with French writings. The most important of them may be enumerated here. He uses the simple definite article in expressions like (XV, 108, 12 f.) war Gustav Adolf immer der erste bereit (181, 11 f.) so wurde es diesem General nicht schwer, der erste den Wall zu ersteigen. The indefinite article is often used with abstracts where German employs no article at all: (XV, 82, 26) war von einem freien und aufgeweckten Geist, vieler Güte, einer königlichen Freigebigkeit; (XVI, 124, 25) mit einer gehaltenen Würde und hoher Ruhe; (125, 37) mit einer kühnen lyrischen Freiheit. He omits the numeral pronoun in superlative constructions like (XIV, 129, 24 f.) war von den grössten Rechtsgelehrten seiner Zeit; (192, 36) der von den ersten war, die den Kompromiss unterschrieben; (242, 3 f.) von denen, welche, waren auch Egmont und der Prinz von Oranien; (268, 35) ist von den ersten, welche stürzen; (XVI, 48, 28) Die Geschichte ist von den interessantesten, die ich kenne; (letter to Herder, July 24, 1787; I, 352) die Freude, die von den ersten Erwartungen meiner Hierherreise gewesen ist. He forms a personal passive of verbs governing a dative object in the active: (*Don Carlos*, 4756 f.) Verfassungen wie meine wollen geschmeichelt sein; (XV, 13, 35 ff.) eine Versicherung, die, von den katholischen Reichsteilen widersprochen; (375, 16 f.) gehorcht zu sein wie er konnte kein Feldherr in den mittleren und neueren Zeiten sich rühmen. He adds a negative in subordinate clauses after *hindern, verbieten, fehlen*: (VIII, 210, 11 ff.) zu verhindern, dass der Zuschauer nicht verwirrt wird; (XIII, 45, 9) hinderte aber nicht, dass sie sich nicht immer stärker ausbreiteten; 89, 29; 100, 37 f.; XIV, 250, 29 f.; XV, 191, 16; 257, 6; 264, 38 f.; 277, 1; 289, 22; 335, 31 f.; 375, 25 f.; XVI, 110, 3; 113, 3; *Iphigenie*, 1686. He uses *nicht* in a dependent clause after a comparative: (*Don Carlos*, 71 f.) mehr des Unheils als Gift und Dolch in Mörders Hand nicht konnten; (115) fürstlicher bezahlt, als er noch keine gute Tat bezahlte; *Piccolomini*, 1373 f. weiter fördern, als es in Jahren nicht gedieh; XIII, 189, 32 nachdrücklicher, als offenbare Gewalt es nimmermehr gekonnt hätte; 240, 34 mehr Soldaten ins Feld, als alle Ermahnungen ihrer Anführer nicht vermocht haben

würden; letter of December 19, 1787 (I, 444) ich bin wachsamer, als ich nie war. He joins a relative clause to a noun with an adjective modifier by means of *und*: (XIV, 212, 3 f.) das einzige Mittel, den bisherigen Verwirrungen zu begegnen, und welches alle übrigen entbehrlich machen würde; (310, 1 f.) Straalen, einen genauen Freund des Prinzen von Oranien und der im Verdacht war; (XV, 11, 21 f.) ein lebhafteres, näher liegenderes Interesse als die Vaterlandsliebe, und welches durchaus unabhängig war; (46, 35 f.) die Calvinisten, als die Schwächeren und welche ohnehin vom Religionsfrieden ausgeschlossen waren. The structure is likewise wholly French in XV, 105, 3 ff. die Wut der Faktionen, von denen er endlich ein beklagenswertes Opfer ward. Overagainst such un-German modes of sentence structure, occasional slips like (XIII, 264, 26) eine kleine Geduld; (XIV, 87, 10) der Hass gegen diesen gewann es (*l'emporta*) sogar einmal über seine angeborene Verstellungskunst; (IX, 331, 10) Die grosse Angelegenheit! (= Das geht natürlich vor!) do not weigh very heavily, and do not seem to have been felt so strongly at Schiller's time.

"Every one, because he speaks, thinks he is also privileged to speak on language."⁴⁴ Of this claim—as amusing to the linguistic scholar as it is at times annoying—Schiller has made but sparing use. His utterances on his mother tongue in particular and on language in general are neither numerous nor systematic. As we have seen, he never studied language historically; nor has he given us any elaborate philosophical treatise on the subject. His statements on linguistic matters are occasional by-products of his æsthetic, historic, and poetic activity. As such, however, they are indeed worthy of more than passing notice.

We have above become acquainted with a somewhat derogatory utterance of Schiller on the German language, apropos of his translation of Virgil. He never expressed himself so harshly about it as Goethe did, when in a moment of ill humor he called German the vilest material for a poet—a statement that he, more than any one else, had even at that time put to shame. The earliest testimony of Schiller's views on German is found in his review of Stäudlin's *Proben einer deutschen Aeneis*, as quoted before, where, half ironically, he calls German a heroic language (XVI, 158, 28 f. "that Virgil would suffer so little in a translation that, on the contrary,

⁴⁴Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 1212. IV, 162.

he would gain strength in the manly garb of the Teuton"). In 1789, in a double review of a translation of Goldoni's *Memoirs*, he replies to the charge of the translator (XVI, 192, 12): "Barring a few trifles, the rendering is easy and fluent. The reviewer finds nothing in it to object to, except that at times the speech becomes too pretentious and finical where it ought to be natural dialogue; which criticism, however, Mr. Schatz tries to obviate by saying in the preface that he had to commit this fault in order not to become insipid, because our tongue lacks real familiar ways of speaking (*façons de parler familières*). The reviewer confesses himself at a loss to comprehend what Mr. S. means by that, and that to him a fair number of recognizedly good writers, starting with Gellert and Rabener, seem to furnish visible proof that our language is not deficient in *façons de parler familières* that are not insipid." Again (p. 194): "That in the conversational portions his tone often becomes studied and prim the translator seems to have felt himself, and he attempts to lay this reproach on the German language in its entirety, which he says cannot avoid the extreme of platitude except through the opposite extreme of artificiality. Since Mr. Schatz probably does not intend competing with so many of our classical writers who have furnished models of the higher social diction in German, this reproach can probably extend no further than to the social circles that he himself has observed, and if these showed him no middle road between platitude and artificiality, it was at least a trifle rash to extend this judgment to his whole nation. Even though the German language must, from a certain class of people who would scarcely pass an examination in it, suffer this both unreasonable and undeserved stricture, one ought at least no longer at present to send it out into the world at large." But as both here and on a previous occasion he had deplored the lack of the elegant negligence in German style so characteristic of French, he writes to his princely patron, the Duke of Augustenburg, as late as April 5, 1795 (IV, 158): "Your serene highness' remarks concerning the ponderous presentation are well founded, and it deserves indeed the greatest attention on the part of the writers to combine the required thoroughness and depth with a facile diction. But as yet our language is not quite capable of this great revolution, and all that good writers can do is to strive toward this goal of form. The speech of fine society and social intercourse still shrink too much from the keen, often hair-splitting definiteness so indispensable to

the philosopher, and the speech of the scholar is incapable of the urbanity, ease and vivacity that the man of the world rightly demands. It is the misfortune of the Germans that their language has not been deemed worthy of becoming the organ of refined social intercourse, and it will suffer the evil consequences of this exclusion for a long time to come."

The preface to his own translation of Virgil, in which he calls German "vacillating, inflexible, broad, Gothic, harsh-sounding," appeared in 1791. In the same year Schiller, in a letter to Körner, November 28 (III, 169 f.), makes one of the most remarkable observations, if it is not the most important, to be found anywhere in his writings, on this subject: "If I could unite it with my other plans, a national subject after all would get the preference. No writer, no matter how cosmopolitan he may be in his mind, can escape from his fatherland in his mental processes. Even though it were only the language that stamps him, it alone would suffice to confine him to a certain form, and to assure his product of a national individuality. But if he were to choose a foreign subject, the subject matter would always be in a certain contradiction with the presentation, while on the other hand, in case of a subject chosen from his own country, contents and form stand in a natural relationship." Schiller's fine remark antedates as well as anticipates Wilhelm von Humboldt's ideas on the inner form of language by decades, and the work of Franz Nikolaus Finck by about a century. It is to be very much regretted that Humboldt did not know this letter to Körner⁴⁵ at the time when he wrote the *Vorerinnerung* to the publication of his correspondence with Schiller. As the passage quoted contains in it the undeniable truth which literary study of the past century has made trite and a truism, that "Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichters Lande gehen," it also points prophetically to the worthiest and most difficult of all tasks in store for twentieth century philology, namely, the analysis of a speech community on the basis of its language.

Shortly after the beginning of his friendship with Goethe, in his famous letter of August 23, 1794 (III, 475), Schiller hints at the relative weakness and strength of his mother tongue from the viewpoint of prosody: "The little book by Moritz⁴⁶ I

⁴⁵The correspondence between Schiller and Körner was first published in 1847.

⁴⁶Karl Philipp Moritz, *Versuch einer deutschen Prosodie*. 1786.

have read with great interest and am indebted to it for some very valuable information. It is a veritable joy to render oneself a plain account of an instinctive procedure, which may also lead one astray very easily, and to verify feeling by law. In pursuing Moritz' ideas one sees a very beautiful order gradually replace the anarchy of language, and even though on this occasion the defects and limitations of our language are detected, one also learns its strength and knows how, and to what purpose, one may use it." Even if not very important in itself, the statement is significant as a sign of a juster general appreciation of his mother tongue as a poetical instrument. It does not necessarily imply that overagainst his erstwhile severe criticism of German in comparison with Virgil's language he had adopted Herder's view that "a creative genius can transform the harshness of our tongue into emphasis, its inflexibility into majesty." But it is noteworthy that from about the middle of the nineties we find no longer any criticisms on Schiller's part against his mother tongue, except the very slight one mentioned above in the letter to the Duke of Augustenburg, and the joking reference in Xenion, 310, entitled *Böse Zeiten*, jointly with Goethe (see Goethe, II, 340):

Philosophen verderben die Sprache, Poeten die Logik,

Und mit dem Menschenverstand kommt man durchs Leben nicht mehr,—

which is, of course, strictly speaking, not to be interpreted as a censure of the language itself.

Partly at least, as Albert Leitzmann has proven,⁴⁷ under the inspiring influence of Herder in the seventh and eighth collection of his *Humanitätsbriefe* (published at Easter, 1796), and of A. W. von Schlegel's observations in his review of the *Horen* (Jenaische allgemeine Literaturzeitung, January 4-6, 1796) and of Voss's translation of Homer (ibid., August 22-26, 1796), Schiller found words of the highest praise for his mother tongue in the plan of a *carmen saeculare*, entitled *Deutsche Grösse*, that must have had its birth shortly before the end of the century, but was never worked out and has remained a fragment. Here he says (II, 387): "The precious jewel of our German language, that expresses everything, the deepest and the most evanescent, the spirit, the soul, that is full of genius. Our speech will rule the world. Language is the mirror

⁴⁷*Schillers Gedichtentwurf "Deutsche Grösse,"* Euphorion XII (1905), 1 ff.

of a nation. When we behold ourselves in this mirror, a great and splendid reflection of ourselves meets our eyes. We are learning to express both the Greek with its everlasting youthfulness and the modern with its fulness of ideality."⁴⁸

As the last expression of the poet's opinion on the subject, and one that must have originated at about the same time as the plan of *Deutsche Grösse*, we have among his Votive Tablets (No. 48; I, 150) the distich called *Der Dilettant*:

Weil ein Vers dir gelingt in einer gebildeten Sprache,
Die für dich dichtet und denkt, glaubst du schon Dichter zu sein?⁴⁹

As these highly appreciative utterances on his mother tongue are the last in point of time that we have from him on the subject, they have to be considered as his final and definitive opinion. It is to be noted that they coincide with the time when after eight years of historical study and writing Schiller returned once more to poetry. Hence I would, even though the outward influence that helped them into being appears to be proven, attribute the poet's change of opinion to the exhilarating joy of having once more come into his own. Neither would I regard, as does Hermann Michel, l. c., his judgment of his language in *Deutsche Grösse* as the emanation of a transient mood. For not only had Schiller in the years immediately preceding become clearly conscious of his place on the Parnassus by the side of Goethe and the ancients, but we may well assume that he

⁴⁸This thought had been expressed also by Frederick the Great in his book *De la Littérature allemande*: "It may come to pass that our language, polished and perfected, will for the benefit of our good writers extend from one end of Europe to the other,"—an opinion all the more remarkable in the light of the fact that Frederick was anything but an admirer of German and its literature, handled the language very imperfectly, and wrote the very book from which the quotation is taken in French.—Schlegel, likewise, in his *Berliner Vorlesungen* (1803), said: "It is therefore not altogether too sanguine to hope that the time is not so very far remote when German will be the general medium of communication for the civilized nations."

⁴⁹The same idea is taken up by Goethe in that portion of his *Schriften über Literatur und Theater* that deals with *Deutsche Sprache* (1817; XXXII, 509): "Unfortunately we often forget that men write their mother tongue as if it were a foreign one. What I mean is this: When throughout a given epoch much has been written and the gamut of active human feelings and fates has been worked through in a certain language, then the content of the period is exhausted and the language with it, so that thereafter any person of moderate talent can readily use the existing expressions as settled phrases." Translation by Professor B. Q. Morgan.

was also filled with the proud consciousness that he was now possessed most eminently of that quality for which he had himself created the expression in one of his earliest coinages: *Sprachgewalt*. Where in his essay on *Naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung* he characterizes the language of genius he clearly has Goethe in mind, but the words apply to himself no less potently (XII, 175, 28): "From the naive mode of thinking emanates necessarily also a naive mode of expression both in words and in movements, and this is the most important constituent of grace. Genius expresses its most sublime and most profound thoughts with this naive grace; they are divine oracles from the lips of a child. Philistine understanding, ever dreading to commit an error, crucifies its words as well as its concepts on the cross of grammar and logic; is hard and rigid, to avoid being vague; makes many words, to avoid saying too much; and robs thought of strength and keenness, so that it may not cut a person not on his guard: genius gives to its thought, with a single happy stroke of the brush, a permanent, firm, and yet entirely free outline. With grammar and logic, the sign and the thing signified will ever remain heterogeneous and foreign to each other: with genius, as though through an inward necessity, the expression springs forth from the idea, and the two are so much one and the same that even under its bodily veil the spirit appears nude. This mode of expression, in which the sign wholly disappears in the thing signified, and in which the language leaves the thought that it expresses so to speak nude, while the other mode of expression can never express it without at the same time veiling it, is what is by preference called the style of genius and originality."

The passage just quoted does not refer directly to the poet's mother tongue, but being an observation applicable to all languages, it naturally refers to German by inclusion. The characteristic feature of it is that the poet has again recognized in speech the instrument of carefree artistic self-expression which communicates itself to others through the force of the personality behind it; and that the poet has conquered the philosopher whose chief concern is the communication to others of the subject matter, with the thinker's personality strictly subordinated.

Of this dual character of language, it is naturally the speaker's or writer's inability for accurate communication that has at all times aroused overt or covert attacks against it. The indisputable deficiency of language as a medium of exact communication—of its

⁵⁰For a convenient collection of references, see Georg Rausch, *Goethe und die deutsche Sprache*, Leipzig und Berlin 1909, p. 14 ff.

will. On learning that a man has control also over his features, one no longer, from the moment of this discovery, trusts his face, and no longer accepts his features and gestures as expressions of his sentiments."⁶¹ A comparison of the different kinds of motions (ibid., 199, 22) shows their relation to linguistic expression: "The voluntary movement is connected with the preceding disposition but accidentally; the sympathetic or concomitant movement, however, is connected with it by necessity. The former is to the soul what the conventional signs of language are to the thoughts that they express; the sympathetic or concomitant movement, however, is to the soul what the passionate outcry is to passion." This observation is amplified in the essay *Über das Pathetische* (XI, 254, 8): "Still, even those organs that are subject to the control of the will power do not always await the decision of the will, but often instinct sets them into motion directly, especially when the physical condition is threatened with pain or danger. Thus a man's arm does stand under the control of his will, but let him unknowingly touch some very hot object, the drawing back of his hand is certainly no act of his will, but brought about solely by instinct. Still more: speech certainly is something that stands under the control of the will, and yet instinct can dispose also of this instrument and creation of the intellect after its discretion, without first consulting the will, as soon as a great pain, or even merely a strong affection, takes us by surprise. Let the most composed stoic suddenly behold something wonderful or unexpectedly terrible, let him be present when some one has slipped and is about to fall into an abyss. A loud outcry, and not an inarticulate sound, but a distinct word, will involuntarily escape from his lips, and nature will have acted in him before the will. This, then, is proof that there are in man phenomena that cannot be attributed to his person as an intelligence, but only to his instinct as a natural force."

Speech, then, according to this, and in general consonance with eighteenth century views, is "the instrument and creation of the intellect." As Michel has pointed out, we need not assume that Schiller has his ideas on the human, rather than divine, origin of

⁶¹These remarks recall to mind the frivolous word of Talleyrand that "language has been given to man to conceal his thoughts." While Talleyrand is generally quoted as the source, it is to be noted that the same idea has been expressed before him by Dionysius, Plutarch, Cato, Dante, Molière, Voltaire, and Edward Young; cf. Richard Zozmann, *Zitaten- und Sentenzenschatz der Weltliteratur* (Leipzig o. J.), under *Sprache*.

language from Herder's writings on the subject, for Kant also was of this opinion, and the defenders of the opposite view were growing fewer and fewer in number. Schiller does not concern himself much about the exact nature of the genesis of speech—in fact, he does not seem to have taken any interest in what others thought about the matter, as would appear from his letter to A. W. Schlegel of August 29, 1795 (IV, 303): "Your letters on poetry have given me much pleasure, and I am impatient to read the continuation. You seem to me to be on a very promising road, and the careful combination of the objective and subjective sides of speech, in the way in which you present it, will lead to very fruitful results in this matter. One might perhaps wish that you had approached your goal a little more rapidly, but I do not doubt that in the continuation you will justify the brief stop you make in speaking about language in general and its origin. I will defer my judgment on your entire investigation until I can survey more of your ideas. It is composed in a very graceful and lively style and ought to be welcome to every one who otherwise would have been deterred by the irksome access to the matter." To him it is sufficient that language, and in its retinue, tradition, existed at the earliest stage of human progress. In his inaugural address at the University of Jena he says (XIII, 17, 8): "A long chain of events, linked as causes and effects, extends from this present moment back to the beginnings of the human race. Only the infinite intellect can survey it in its entirety and completeness; to man narrower limits have been set. I. A countless number of these events either did not find a human witness and observer, or were not handed down through any sign. To this category belong all those that preceded the human race itself and the invention of writing. The source of all history is tradition, and the organ of tradition is speech. The whole epoch antedating speech, no matter how full of consequences it may have been for the world, is lost for universal history. II. But even after speech had been invented and through it a possibility had been created to express and communicate things that had happened, this communication was at first effected through the insecure and changeable means of legend. Such an event was transmitted by word of mouth through a long series of generations, and passing through media that are changed and do change, had to undergo these changes with them. Living tradition or oral legend, therefore, is a very unreliable source of history. Hence, all events

antedating the use of writing are almost entirely lost for universal history."⁵² Again, in *Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft* (XIII, 28, 6): "The first sons to whom the mother of the human race gave birth had a great advantage over their parents: they were brought up by human beings. All of the progress that the latter had been compelled to make through themselves and consequently much more slowly, redounded to the benefit of their children and was transmitted to them in their tender infancy, as if it were play, and with all the affection of parental love. With the first son, then, born of woman, the great instrument begins to be effective—the instrument through which all mankind has received, and will continue to receive, its education: tradition, or the handing down of thought."

Language being the creation of the human intellect, its meaning, and the meaning of words, is not determined by necessity but by convention and agreement.⁵³ The effect of this is discussed at length in one of the Kallias letters to Körner, February 28, 1793 (III, 297): "The medium of the poet consists of words; abstract signs, then, for species and families, never for individuals; signs, furthermore, the relations of which are determined by rules, the latter being embodied in a system by grammar. No difficulty at all arises from the fact that there is no material similarity (identity) between the words and things, for such we do not find either between the statue and the human being that it represents. But the

⁵²Cf. *Der Spaziergang* (I, 132), 135 f. "Körper und Stimme leiht die Schrift dem stummen Gedanken; durch der Jahrhunderte Strom trägt ihn das redende Blatt."—What Schiller in *Die Sendung Moses* (XIII, 51, 38 ff.) has to say on hieroglyphic writing is entirely antiquated, and based on totally erroneous conceptions. In passing it may be remarked that he does not here or elsewhere consider the double character of writing, and disregards the fact that hieroglyphic writing has monumental, rather than documentary, character: "Long before writing became a means of communication between distant persons and served the exchange of thoughts, it was so to speak an end in itself, as a pictured and purely monumental presentation of linguistic thought. The oldest records of the ancient languages are hieroglyphic, i. e., intended for the deity, for eternity, and but secondarily for mankind and earthly life. The first motives of writing are metaphysical, the first written records are monuments, not documents. The monument exists for itself and is a document of itself; it is not to be used, but worshipped, adored, looked at. If it has a purpose, it is only the theoretical purpose of contemplation." Karl Vossler, *Frankreichs Kultur im Spiegel seiner Sprachentwicklung* (Heidelberg 1913), p. 1.

⁵³*Les mots ne signifient naturellement, mais à plaisir.* Montaigne.

merely formal similarity (imitation) between words and things is not so very easy. The thing and its verbal expression are connected only accidentally and arbitrarily (barring a very few cases), only through convention. However, even that would be of little significance, because the question is not what the word is in itself, but only what conceptions it arouses. If, then, there were at all words, or word-sentences, that would present to us the most individual character of things, their most individual relations, in brief, the entire objective peculiarity of the individual, it would not matter in the least whether this were achieved through convention or through necessity.

"But that is exactly what is lacking. Both the words and the laws of their inflection and syntax are very general things that serve as signs not for one individual, but for an infinite number of individuals. We meet a difficulty still more arduous when it is a question of denoting the relations, which is effected according to rules applicable to innumerable and wholly heterogeneous cases at the same time, and adapted to an individual conception only through a special operation of the intellect. Before the object to be represented is brought face to face, visibly, with the imagination, it must take a most devious route through the abstract domain of thought, a route on which it loses much of its life and sensuous power. The poet has indeed no other means to represent the individual than the artificial juxtaposition of the general—"the lamp just now standing before me is falling over" is such an individual case expressed through the combination of entirely general signs.

"The nature of the medium of which the poet avails himself consists, accordingly, in a tendency toward generality, and thereby is at variance with the denotation of the individual (the poet's proper task). Language places everything before the intellect, and the poet is to place everything before the imagination (i. e., represent it); poetry demands visualization (*Anschauungen*), language gives only conceptions (*Begriffe*).

"Language, then, deprives the object, the presentation of which is entrusted to it, of its sensuous and individual character, and imposes upon it a quality of language itself (generality), which is foreign to it. It mingles with the sensuous nature of the object to be represented, the abstract nature of the representing medium, and so brings about a heteronomy in its representation. The object is presented to the imagination not as determined by itself,

that is, not as free, but moulded through the genius of language, if, indeed, it is not brought before the intellect only; and so it is either not represented as free, or it is not represented at all but only described.

"If, then, a poetic representation is to be free, the poet must overcome the tendency of language to generality through the greatness of his art and conquer matter (words and their laws of inflection and construction) through form (viz., their application). The nature of language (that is, its tendency to generality) must disappear completely in the form given to it, the body must lose itself in the idea, the sign in the thing signified, reality in the form (*Erscheinung*). Free and victorious the object to be represented must shine forth from the representing medium, and must appear, in spite of all the bonds of speech, before imagination in its entire truth, life, and personality. In one word: the beauty of poetic representation is autonomous action of nature in the limitations of language."

The same ideas, partly in the same wording, are found also in Schiller's æsthetic lectures of 1792 (XII, 351, 26): "The nature of the medium, of the material, must be completely overcome. Thus in a statue the marble, in an actor his own natural character must not be visible. The poet must try to conquer the tendency toward generality that is contained in the nature of his language (which is antagonistic to individuality), so that the object to be represented may appear in its true individuality and specific character. Autonomous, self-determined action in nature represented through language constitutes beauty in poetry. A representation is beautiful if it has suffered the fewest limitations from the nature of the representing medium. The aim of representation for others brings about heteronomy in the work of art, and is apt to impair its beauty.—The freedom of poetic representation rests on the independence of the represented object from the specific character of language, the representing medium, and the exterior purpose of the work of art. The poet may avoid the first-named dependence, that on the abstract nature of language, by trying to individualize his object, e. g., by using the part for the whole, the effect for the cause, in so far as greater distinctness is gained thereby. In the same way, representing the remote as though it were close at hand serves to vivify the picture of autonomous nature. To this category belongs also the analogy of ideas and sensations, especially with nonsensuous objects. Here there is the freedom of similes.

The poet links picture to picture, in which Homer was most lavish; Virgil used similes more sparingly and chose them more felicitously. In this way arises the most vivid expression.—The poet makes use of the sensuous to visualize the nonsensuous, and tries to arouse analogous emotions through analogous images, as Haller does in his *Ewigkeit*.”

The generalizing trend of language is enhanced through abstract diction. This Schiller is willing to modify wherever it can be done without impairing the accuracy of the presentation (letter to Körner, January 5, 1795; IV, 95): “You will have to pardon me for the abstract style, which after all, for such a theme, shows considerable flesh and blood. For I believe that I was on the boundary line, and without weakening the force of my arguments, I could not have yielded anything of the rigor of my diction. If, however, you should find a word or phrase that might be exchanged for something more usual, be sure to call my attention to it. I am willing to do anything that my human nature will permit.”

One way of infusing more blood into the style, Schiller recognizes, is to grant the verb a preponderating place, instead of “letting the noun do the work.” Benjamin Constant, in his *Journal intime* (edited by D. Melegari, Paris, 1895), 22 Pluviôse XII (1804), has preserved the following:⁵⁴ “It is a brilliant observation of Schiller’s that the verb produces a more animated style than the noun. Thus *das Lieben* (*aimer*) expresses more action than *die Liebe* (*l’amour*), *leben* (*vivre*) more than *das Leben* (*la vie*), *das Sterben* (*mourir*) more than *der Tod* (*la mort*). The verbs always express that which is present, the nouns more that which is past.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴Petersen, p. 375, No. 418; Biedermann, p. 387, No. 322.

⁵⁵Goethe has an interesting remark on the same subject in his *Geschichte der Farbenlehre, Sechzehntes Jahrhundert, Julius Cäsar Skaliger*, XL, 88, 7 ff.: “What a different scientific perspective the world would have gained if the Greek language had been kept alive and been cultivated in place of Latin. . . . Greek is more naive in all respects, much better adapted to a natural, cheerful, brilliant, æsthetic exposition of felicitous views of nature. The use of verbs, especially infinitives and participles, makes all expressions contingent; the word does not really decide, circumscribe, or establish anything, but is merely an allusion designed to call up the object before the imagination. The use of substantives, on the other hand, makes the Latin language determinative and peremptory. Each concept is set up ready-made in the word, is congealed in the word, which writers then proceed to treat like a genuine entity.” (Translation by Professor B. Q. Morgan.)—On the syntactic as well as stylistic aspect of this difference, cf. Hermann Wunderlich, *Der deutsche Satzbau*, erste Auflage (Stuttgart 1892), p. 17 ff.; zweite Auflage (1901) vol. I, p. 2 ff., especially 8 ff.

We find other expressions of Schiller's of the idea that thought, to reach its destination, must make a detour through language and never retains its integral life. One of the most striking is contained in the first letter on the *Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (XII, 4, 29): "To grasp the fleeting apparition, he (the philosopher) must shackle it in the fetters of rules, must lacerate and dissect its beautiful body into abstract conceptions, and preserve its living spirit in a shadowy skeleton of words. Is it to be wondered at that natural feeling should not recognize itself in such a copy, and that truth in the analyst's report should appear as a paradox?" This idea is not new to him, for he had given it poetic expression in a passage of his *Don Carlos* in the eighties, nor is it a fleeting fancy, for he quotes this passage on three different occasions in his correspondence, after intervals of years. The first quotation occurs in a letter to Körner, April 15, 1786 (I, 289): "I should wish to write you so much today, my thoughts are so near to you, and yet I fear I shall give you an example of what you recently read:

Schlimm, dass der Gedanke
erst in die Elemente trockner Silben
zersplittern muss, die Seele zum Gerippe
verdorren muss, der Seele zu erscheinen."

In a somewhat different form, he quotes the passage to Lotte, July 24, 1789 (II, 306): "Your feelings on that evening were a vague divination of mine, and I wish they had been a reflection of them, then you would have understood me without words, and all the human beings and beings in human form about us would not have disturbed our intercourse. In my *Carlos* I had a passage that I have omitted with the whole scene in which it was contained. This passage expresses best what I mean.

Schlimm, dass der Gedanke
erst in der Worte tote Elemente
zersplittern muss, die Seele sich im Schalle
verkörpern muss, der Seele zu erscheinen.
Den treuen Spiegel halte mir vor Augen,
der meine Seele ganz empfängt und ganz
sie wiedergibt, dann, dann hast du genug,
das Rätsel meines Lebens aufzuklären

When I wrote these words I little thought that sometime I might have to let them speak for myself." And finally to Humboldt, February 2, 1796 (IV, 406): "I am so far as the contents of our letters are concerned so greatly behind you that I am fairly fright-

ened as to how I shall ever catch up with you. All my embarrassment would be a light matter if I could settle with you orally, but I am often in a queer situation with my pen. If I am once well started, as I was last summer and fall, I can, amidst the most burdensome activities, write long letters without considering the mechanical side of it. But when I once, as is the case now, have left this mechanism behind me, my thought dreads the long road it has to travel in order to reach its destination.

O schlimm dass der Gedanke
Erst in der Sprache tote Elemente
Zerfallen muss, die Seele zum Gerippe
Absterben muss, der Seele zu erscheinen;
Den treuen Spiegel gib mir, Freund, der ganz
Mein Herz empfängt und ganz es widerscheint.

This passage formerly contained in my *Don Carlos*, but excised, expresses somewhat what I now feel at certain moments when I am to write to you or to Körner."

The sentiment appears crystallized and in enduring form in the oft-quoted epigram entitled *Sprache* (Votivtafeln 41; I, 149):

Warum kann der lebendige Geist dem Geist nicht erscheinen?
Spricht die Seele, so spricht, ach! schon die *Seele* nicht mehr.

I cannot refrain from quoting here, both on account of the analogy offered and the gracefulness of its expression, a little poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes (not contained in the Riverside edition of his *Poetical Works*; first printed in *The Library*, for August, 1891), an author's plea to the reader:

Deal gently with us, ye who read!
Our largest hope is unfulfilled,
The promise still outruns the deed,
The tower, but not the spire, we build.
Our whitest pearl we never find;
Our ripest fruit we never reach;
The flowering moments of the mind
Lose half their petals in our speech.

It is, however, questionable whether Holmes had the identical thought in mind that Schiller desired to express. It seems, rather, that he thought not so much of the inadequacy of speech to convey the poet's idea, as of the poet's inability to exhaust all the resources of language for the attainment of his aim.

A highly characteristic passage which in spite of the negation contained in it shows clearly how intent the poet was on analyzing and clearly expressing to himself all that animated him, is found in

a letter to Lotte, February 10, 1790 (III, 46f.): "I feel that I am happy and shall be happy through you; I feel it no less deeply that you will be happy through me. I *feel* it, and that means much more to me than if I could analyze it in logical deductions and express these in words."

As we have seen in the case of his mother tongue, above, where he arrives finally at a deep appreciation and intense admiration of the language, the consciousness of his linguistic power as a poet causes him eventually to unite with a note of meditative resignation the triumph of the artist who has made the very imperfection of speech the tool of his conquest. It is the votive tablet *An den Dichter* (I, 149), an answer to the one immediately preceding on *Sprache*:

Lass die Sprache dir sein, was der Körper den Liebenden. Er nur
Ist's der die Wesen trennt, und der die Wesen vereint.

The meaning of language and of individual words being conventional, it becomes the speaker's and writer's duty to cultivate a fixed and stable diction. To Körner he writes, April 15, 1786 (I, 290): "I think you were too rash in your judgment (on Abbt's treatise *Vom Verdienst*), and were repelled by a certain chaotic expression, by the indefiniteness of some sentences." Similarly he criticizes Moritz's treatise *Über bildende Nachahmung des Schönen*, in a letter to Caroline von Beulwitz, January 3, 1789 (II, 199ff.): "I have merely glanced at his book. It is difficult to understand, because he has no fixed diction and often in the very midst of philosophical abstractions is tangled up in figurative language, and sometimes even connects specific concepts with words of different significance." He is therefore anxious to use words only with a well defined meaning, as in *Über Anmut und Würde* (XI, 241, 24): "*Reiz*, *Anmut*, and *Grazie*, to be sure, are ordinarily used as equivalents, but they are not, or at least ought not to be, since the concept that they express is capable of several definitions, each one of which deserves a distinct notation." In a footnote to the twelfth letter on the *Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (XII, 43) he gives very careful definitions of the phrases *ausser sich*, *bei sich*, *von sich sein*, *in sich gehen*; and in the fifteenth (57, 2) defends his new coinage *Spieltrieb* on the analogy of general usage. There may arise conditions in which an individual thinks that language has as yet no word, and cannot have one, for what he feels; cf. *Geisterseher* II, 331, 21: "Your highness, that is love."—"Must it necessarily be a name under which I am happy? Love! Do not debase my

feeling by a name that a thousand weak souls misuse! What other man has ever felt what I feel? Such a being never existed—how can the name have existed before the sensation? It is a new and unique feeling, arisen with this new and unique being, and possible only for this being! Love! Against love I am proof!”—According to Caroline von Wolzogen, *Schillers Leben*, p. 243, under March 26, 1801, the poet said, over a cup of tea: “Young people should be accustomed as early as possible to give expression to their thoughts and feelings, for such communication demands of them forcible and logical thinking. Communication renders our oftentimes vague feelings clear, distinct, and general. We accustom ourselves at an early time to speak and listen, our ideas develop more quickly, our judgment becomes more reliable, and we grow easily used to embracing, with a full soul, our subject in its large outlines and in all of its phases.”

Schiller detested intensely all mere word sounds that had no meaning back of them. Thus he says in his *Philosophische Briefe* (XI, 111, 14): “Creation?—But no, that is merely a sound without meaning, which my reason must reject.” To Körner he writes on July 4, 1795 (IV, 201): “Some time ago I read in the *Deutscher Merkur* an essay by your friend (Friedrich) Schlegel on the *Grenzen des Schönen*. What a confusion of concepts and what a harshness of presentation! You must not pardon him for such a thing if you may tell him the truth. He is well informed and thinks about his subject. But he does not attain clearness, nor, for that very reason, ease of diction. I really fear he has no talent to become a writer.” Likewise to Goethe, July 27, 1798 (V, 410): “I also confess that in the æsthetic judgments of these two (the Schlegel brothers) I meet with such dryness, barrenness, and fleshless rigorism in words that I am often in doubt whether they really at times conceive of an object behind it all.” It is to such as these that, together with Goethe, he addresses Xenion 50, *Der Geist und der Buchstabe* (II, 99):

Lange kann man mit Marken, mit Rechenpfennigen zahlen;
Endlich, es hilft nichts, ihr Herrn, muss man den Beutel doch ziehn.

And in *Die Worte des Wahns* (I, 165) he shows the utter futility of any attempt to imprison the spirit in empty words:

Du kerkerst den Geist in ein tönend Wort,
Doch der freie wandelt im Sturme fort.

On repeated occasions we have been able to observe how careful Schiller always is to see to it that a new or unusual word in his writings should not remain a mere sound, and how carefully he fashions for it the right setting. Of this he renders a detailed account to the Leipzig philosopher Garve, January 25, 1795 (IV, 107): "In your last letter you raised some objections against the use of the word *ästhetisch*. I also dislike to render more difficult for the lay reader the understanding of a book that is to popularize philosophical truths, through the admixture of technical terms. But if the context explains these technical terms, indeed if one—as I consistently do in such cases—adds to them an explicit definition, I consider it an advantage to give such words gradually more currency, because definiteness and precision in thinking must necessarily be thereby promoted. Our language has, as far as I am aware, no word to denote the relation of an object to the finer sensibility, since *schön*, *erhaben*, *angenehm*, etc., are merely species of it. As the expressions *moralisch* and *physisch* are unhesitatingly used of education, and as these two terms by no means express that kind of education that attempts to cultivate the finer sensitive faculty, I regarded it as permissible, nay, necessary, to speak of an æsthetic education. It is the same with human intercourse: I call it *moralisch* when it concerns human relations that can be determined by duties; I call it *physisch* where only the exigencies of nature prescribe its laws; I call it *ästhetisch* where men are to each other nothing but phenomena, and where only the impression they make on the sense of beauty is considered."

This same letter to Garve contains, immediately adjoining the preceding, a fine passage that, as a wholesome antidote to Goethe's attack against *Schwarz auf weiss*, which he would like to see abolished altogether, and as a summary of some of the most important ideas of Schiller, as treated in the foregoing, may fittingly conclude our observations. "I regret," Schiller says, "that I did not succeed in encouraging you to compose a treatise on the writer and his specific relations. I should deem this subject all the more important because it is a very peculiar mark of differentiation of the new world against the old, that it receives by far the larger part of its culture in this way. From the very specific fact that the writer influences the reader as it were invisibly and from the distance; that he lacks the advantage of impressing the soul by living speech and the accompaniment of gestures; that he appeals to the feelings

only through abstract signs, hence, through the intellect; but that he has the advantage of leaving his reader, for that very reason, in a state of greater freedom of mind than is possible in living intercourse, etc.: from all of this, it seems to me, there emanate very specific rules and principles that would well be worth a development in detail. In speaking, the individual interferes, and may interfere, in a larger measure with the subject matter. Of the writer we demand the subject matter much more rigorously. But now there is a way of animating the presentation by imparting one's individuality, without impairing the subject matter. It is this way to which I would have desired to have you call especial attention."

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